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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the effectiveness of process writing instruction in English as a second language to foster contextualized situated learning of adverbial clauses of contrast (e.g., "although, even though, however, nevertheless, in spite of, despite, on the other hand"), as demonstrated in a group of six Brazilian upper-intermediate students of English for Special Purposes (ESP), all executives at a multinational company. The students' objective was better use of alternatives to "but" in written business communication. The report chronicles the development of a needs assessment form and elicitation of student views and goals, describes the process writing approach and its use in second language learning, compares Portuguese and English use of adverbial subordinate clauses of contrast, describes classroom procedures and activities, and evaluates results. Students pointed to the consistency of this approach with the principles underlying the ESP program (situated learning and communicative language teaching), and were able to identify their own progress. Their speech was found to be better organized and their ideas were expressed more accurately, appropriately, and coherently. The method is recommended. Materials documenting the classroom approach are appended. Contains 33 references. (MSE)

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The adoption of process writing to develop learners' competence in the use of more refined forms of 'but'

Maria Alice Capocchi Ribeiro

ED 429 458

INTRODUCTION

This paper proposes process writing instruction to foster contextualised situated learning of adverbial clauses of contrast.

The first part will discuss Needs Analysis and its application with a group of six Brazilian ESP students. The following section will explain the relationships between Needs Analysis, Situated Learning, and Process Writing: the principles that guided the development of the writing programme. These will be followed by a discussion of adverbial clauses of contrast that use "words meaning but" (Eastwood, 1996:325), contrasting their use in English and in Portuguese and also discussing their frequency in oral and written discourse. The next section will discuss the process, the tasks and the activities that were conducted to promote writing (and grammatical) instruction.

The conclusion will discuss the positive outcomes of this process and point to other possible applications.

PART 1 – NEEDS ANALYSIS

More refined forms of 'but' – 'although', '(even) though', 'however', 'nevertheless', 'in spite of', 'despite', 'on the other hand' – occur more frequently in written discourse or in formal speech. In business contexts, these forms are frequently used in commercial correspondence and corporate documents, and in lectures and presentations.

ESP books generally present these forms at upper-intermediate stages, perhaps due to the authors' perception that they pose certain difficulties for foreign or second language learners. These forms, also classified as discourse markers (Swan, 1985:172) or linking signals (Leech and Svatrvick, 1981: 156), introduce subordinate clauses which demand from learners the ability to organise ideas meaningfully and coherently, and a higher level of language proficiency than the one needed for the construction of a "but" co-ordinate clause (Eastwood, 1996: 318).

A group of six upper-intermediate ESP students –executives at a multinational company, in their mid-thirties – recently asked for special instruction to be able to use adverbial clauses of contrast in reports and commercial letters in English.

I suggested a Needs Analysis in order to (1) assess the learners' "needs, lacks, and wants" (Hutchinson and Waters, 1991:55); (2) collect samples of the target product; and (3) discuss course design in a dynamic and interactive way, aiming at maximising the potential of the special instruction that learners required.

Instruction can be more appropriately contextualised when the teacher knows how the learners are going to use the language. Several authors (Dubin and Olshtain (1986), Richards (1990), Holmes (1982), Hutchinson and Waters (1991), Pharness (1991)) and adult course designers (Mansoor (1993), and Lomperis (1993)) point to the importance of Needs Analysis for the development of programmes and materials for language learning. According to these authors, Needs Analysis involves the assessment of learners' needs, goals and interests, and of the situations and contexts where the learning will be used.

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Hutchinson & Waters (1991:59) express the concern in assessing where, when, with whom, why, how, and about what topics the learners will use the target language in the real life. Teachers' views should also be assessed, for as Rees-Miller (1993: 685) emphasises, the "fit between teachers' beliefs about how to learn a language and those of their students" is equally important.

These authors' recommendation similarly applies to the development of smaller curriculum segments. In fact, Nunan (1988) states that curriculum should not be viewed as a "prescriptive body of content" (1988:154) but rather as a process where "the teacher ... is the principal agent of curriculum development" (1988:151), being responsible for initial and ongoing needs analysis and content selection and gradation, among other decisions, also "during the course of programme delivery" (1988:179).

Nunan (1988) proposes a learner-centred curriculum where initial and ongoing Needs Analysis play a major role. Hutchinson and Waters (1991), however, elaborate on Nunan's approach for second and foreign language instruction by proposing a learning-centred approach. Not only "*target needs* (i.e. what the learner needs to do in the target situation)" but also "*learning needs* (i.e. what the learner needs to do in order to learn)" should be assessed (Hutchinson and Waters, 1991:54, authors' italics). Although learning-centred instruction is used to define the term "ESP" (English for Specific Purposes), I believe this process approach may (and should) be applied to all types of instruction.

A Needs Assessment form was developed and completed by the six students individually (Appendix 1).

In this form, questions 1, 6 and 10 address target needs, while the other questions address learning needs. Questions 2, 3, 4 and 5 address background experience and the learners' awareness to the fact that writing involves mental sub-processes, affective factors (derived from one's own and others' evaluation) are also raised, for, as Raimes puts it, writing can be 'anguish.' (Raimes 1983:258).

Question 6 reconsiders target needs before learning needs are addressed. Reflecting on learning needs should always be related to the achievement of target needs.

Question 7 involves predicting content, while question 8 again addresses the learners' background and affective factors. Both address "lacks" (Hutchinson and Waters, 1991:55).

Question 9 addresses "needs, lacks, and wants" (Hutchinson and Waters, 1991:55) by investigating (briefly) learning styles, autonomy, and engagement to the learning process.

The language used in the form was kept as simple as possible. The objective was not to test the students' reading comprehension at that moment. So, terms that are very similar to Portuguese facilitated comprehension and still stuck to the main objective. That is why the term audience (question 6) was defined; in question 7, instead of using noun/adjective phrases I chose to use simply nouns, adjectives, etc; similarly, conjunctions instead of subordinate clauses, and relative pronouns instead of relative clauses.

Following the completion of the form there was a discussion of the students' views and also of my views about how instruction should be conducted. The fruits of this discussion were then compiled in a single form (Appendix 2). The students' discourse has been preserved in order to reflect the ownership of their views. Quotations are also used. The numbers between brackets refer to the number of students in the group that expressed specific types of information. The Negotiation expresses the decisions agreed upon during the discussion, which attend to their preferred learning styles and strategies (affective factors included) and the teacher's beliefs.

It should be noted that learners are aware of the their purpose in writing, target audience, style and degrees of formality (question 6), and of the specific grammatical exponents they lack competence in (question 7). They already employ some of the sub-processes of process writing (question 4: "*make notes*", " *plan*", " *draft*, "*review*", and question 9: "*brainstorm*", "*following a model*") at conscious level.

PART 2 – NEEDS ANALYSIS, SITUATED LEARNING AND PROCESS WRITING

Situated learning - or experiential learning, as some authors prefer - originated in the late fifties from a humanistic approach to psychology. It applies primarily to adult learners. Rogers and Freiberg (1994) point out that experiential learning addresses the needs and wants of the learner for it tackles significant, applied knowledge. Learning is facilitated when: (1) the student participates completely in the learning process and has control over its nature and direction, (2) it is primarily based upon direct confrontation with practical, social, personal or research problems, and (3) self-evaluation is the principal method of assessing progress or success. Rogers also emphasises the importance of learning to learn and an openness to change.

Needs Analysis is a vital and democratic tool for both the teacher and the learners. It enables the teacher to present knowledge and to propose practice activities in authentic contexts, i.e., settings and applications that would normally involve that knowledge, while encouraging learners to move away from a peripheral position into a more active participation in the decisions that concern the learning process. Teaching and learning become interwoven, one dependent on the other.

Process Writing is pure situated learning; learning and teaching writing through process writing is like mirroring writing itself.

Writing is composed of various phases. Hedge (1988) outlines planning, composing, revising and editing. In planning, writers think of their ideas, define the audience, use a variety of resources and roughly outlines their plans. Drafting involves transcribing the ideas onto paper in rough form. As more ideas are generated as a result of revising, there will be redrafts, with additions or deletions to the previous drafts. However, revising according to Raimes (cited in Richards 1990:109) can occur at any time in the composing process, allowing the flexibility to explore, to make discoveries and to change ideas. This moving 'backward and forward between drafting and revising with stages of re-planning in between ... leads to clarity' (Hedge, 1988: 21). Therefore, writing is not a one-shot linear and systematic act but a 'sequence of differentiated and recursive process' (Flower and Hayes, cited in Mohani 1992:27).

Writing can thus be seen as a process of exploring one's thoughts and discovering meaning (Zamel, 1982) while relating meaning to a specific audience. "Where, when, with whom, why, how, and about what topics" are features a writer is constantly analysing.

Process writing refers to a broad range of strategies/procedures that promote the writers' constant questioning in a supportive way: the learner-writers are assisted by their peers and by the teacher. There is an evident advantage in having other people to exchange ideas with; other people who will help them to refine the product of this process and who will assume the role of the reader(s).

Six sub-processes can be used with any type of text: Generating, Focusing, Structuring, Drafting, Evaluating, and Reviewing, and may be conducted through a (suggested) sequence of activities:

Discussion (class, small group, pair)
Brainstorming/making notes/asking questions (teacher-learners, peer-peer)
Fastwriting/selecting ideas/establishing a viewpoint
Rough draft
Preliminary self-evaluation
Arranging information/structuring the text
First draft
Group/peer evaluation and responding (teacher / peers)
Second draft
Self-evaluation/editing/proof-reading
Finished draft
Final responding to draft " (adapted from White and Arndt, 1996:7)

A brief initial analysis of the phases and suggested activities enables us to perceive process writing as an integrated skills approach to language learning, one that provides learners with tangible evidence of the progress they are making and one that enables the development of different learning strategies. A more detailed analysis will be supplied in Part 4.

Process writing conforms to the principles of situated learning in that (1) writing becomes experiential when it is drawn from personal experiences and interests, providing learners with a sense of ownership (Maley, 1990); (2) "teaching and learning are joint enterprises ... where the participants have complementary roles and similar status." (White and Arndt, 1996:2); (3) "most of the activities involve discussion and collaboration, so that the writing class becomes, in a very genuine sense, a communicative experience in which much more than skill is practised and developed" (White and Arndt, 1996:3); (4) "the goal of this approach is to nurture the skills with which writers *work out their own solutions to the problems they set themselves*" (White and Arndt, 1996:5, authors' italics).

A writing programme should propose meaningful writing activities according to the level of language proficiency, interests and requirements of the learning context. Writing tasks and activities that resemble real-life communication will also give learners a sense of audience and purpose in their writing (Byrne, 1988:25). Learners will then be able to determine the choice of words, the type of register to use, the formality/informality of language, the tone or style in their writing. This is Needs Analysis in practice. (Byrne, 1988:49), however, suggests that the teacher should "gauge carefully the amount of guidance required" so that the amount of individual writing be gradually increased.

Byrne (1988:9) also claims that "one of our major roles is to familiarise the learners with the devices that are needed for effective communication through the medium of writing." Besides graphological devices (spelling and punctuation), he points to rhetorical resources ("logical devices: linking words that present ideas)" (p. 16). The latter was the target learners' major point of concern (Part 1, Appendix 2) and the object of the short period of process writing instruction that was conducted with the target learners.

PART 3 – ADVERBIAL SUBORDINATE CLAUSES OF CONTRAST

Quirk and Greenbaum (1980:285) suggest the following three factors which pertain in sentence connection: semantic context, lexical equivalent, and syntactic devices. Semantic and lexical choices determine "style and presentation of ideas", that is, "how meanings may be put together in spoken or written discourse", and we use linking signals to help people understand how one idea leads on from another (Leech and Svartvick, 1980:56).

Syntactic devices that have a semantic connective function are classified as adverbials. Adverbials that "are not integrated within the clause" but "indicate the connection of what is being said and what was said before" are defined as conjuncts (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1980:126).

The choice between co-ordination, subordination and linking adverbials is based on the speaker's intention. Co-ordination is basically a series or main clauses, representing "often a 'looser' connection than subordination or adverbial link ... because it is more vague and less emphatic, ... (being) more characteristic of speech than of writing." (Leech and Svartvick, 1981: 158-159). Adverbial links are deliberately not considered here for they represent a more sophisticated type of sentence that would be above the target learners' needs and, consequently, objectives of the proposed writing programme.

Two ideas are in contrast when " ... one is surprising or unexpected in view of the other" (Leech and Svartvick, 1981:97). This indicates clause subordination. Although Quirk and Greenbaum prefer the term 'concession', they used it in a synonymous way: "concessive clauses imply a contrast between two circumstances; *ie* the main clause is surprising in the light of the dependent one" (1980:324).

The term contrast has been adopted for two reasons: (1) According to Hornby (1975), to 'contrast' means to compare so that differences are made clear, and to 'concede' means to allow/admit a point in an argument – which is also a form of contrasting, and (2) to facilitate learning, for the words 'contrast' and *contraste* (Portuguese) mean exactly the same and have very similar spelling.

In Portuguese the syntactic devices that have a semantic connective function are classified as *conjunções* (conjuncts). The semantic choices between co-ordination and subordination also apply. *Orações subordinadas* (subordinate clauses) are syntactically and semantically dependent on the *oração principal* (main clause) and are introduced by *conjunções subordinativas* ["subordinators, or more fully 'subordinating conjunctions' "(Quirk and Greenbaum, 1980:313)].

Orações subordinativas adverbiais (adverbial subordinate clauses) are classified as *concessivas* but explained as 'expressam um fato contrário ao fato expresso na oração principal' (they express a fact that is contrary to the one expressed in the main clause) (Cereja and Magalhães, 1998:275; Sacconi, 1997:289). In fact, the term *concessivas* is only used (in Brazil) in academic contexts. When asked about the meaning of such a term (during Negotiation, Appendix 2), the students were not able to identify the type of clauses it referred to – another reason for my choice of the term 'contrast'.

A Contrastive Analysis (CA) was conducted in order to build on the learners' confidence to use the target grammatical structures. Although James (1986:151-152) assumes that learners know in advance L1:L2 identities because these constitute universal features and/or features that are shared by both languages, and, therefore, need not be learned, I argue that learners of a foreign language (FL) are not always aware of these features - especially learners who have never been abroad. Therefore, pointing to L1:FL identities helps to remove the impression that the FL is too different and too difficult, and also encourages learners to attempt transfers in an inquisitive way.

The CA was initially conducted at what will be tentatively classified as an 'internal FL level': differences and identities between written and spoken discourse.

In spoken discourse, negotiation of meaning is much affected by time. On one hand, time presses us to think and express ideas quickly, in the simplest and most straight-to-the point manner. We tend to produce series of main clauses with finite verbs, or "we use and, or, but and so to join main clauses (Eastwood, 1996:317). Also, using separate clauses allows us more time to remember details and listeners can take in the information more easily. On the other hand, we pause to correct things, to go back and explain something that was missed

out (Eastwood, 1996:65). This produces a somewhat 'broken' discourse, which is unacceptable in writing.

Writing involves the following features of discourse: (1) organisation of ideas, which must be presented in coherent and consistent development and relationship; (2) accuracy of expression, which depends on reflection in order to produce grammatically correct statements (spelling and punctuation included); (3) appropriateness of expression (socio-linguistic choices of language exponents, dependent on target audience and the text type; these will also dictate style and degree of formality). We should not forget our susceptibility to the judgement that is inevitably passed by our audience.

These considerations introduced CA at the "macrolinguistic" level (James, 1986:100-101) and constituted the starting point of **grammatical instruction.** Grammatical instruction focused on adverbial clauses of contrast introduced by the following conjuncts: 'although', '(even) though', 'however', 'nevertheless', 'yet', 'in spite of', 'despite', 'on the other hand'.

Portuguese:English (L1:FL) contrastive analysis was then conducted still at a macrolinguistic level. The above considerations about Portuguese (Cereja and Magalhães, 1998; Sacconi, 1997) were discussed in order to "...specify those features of the [FL] which are different from the corresponding features of the L1, and, by implication, those which are identical." (James, 1986:151). Learners were encouraged to identify the differences and identities in where, when, with whom, why, how, and about what topics the target structure is commonly used in writing in both languages.

Deliberately, 'how' was the last variable to be analysed, for it led to CA at a microlinguistic level: Grammatical CA (James, 1986:66-71). The sentences exhibiting the target structure in each language were isolated and the realisations of the structures were analysed inductively, evolving from the more general syntactic considerations discussed above to more specific features: position of conjuncts, if they were followed by noun or verb phrases, punctuation, etc. James' suggested steps were then inverted: contrasts and identities were discussed before learners worked on the application of the English realisations in proposed new contexts. Appendix 3 supplies the tasks and activities that dealt with CA.

Identifying the target grammatical structures in contexts of meaningful communication, as proposed by Celce-Murcia and Hilles (1988), Larsen Freeman (1991), and Leech and Svartvick (1981), followed by inductive work and contextualised practice enabled learners to understand the uses of these clauses, to experiment with them in situations that mirror real-life use and to build confidence in using them.

PART 4 – PROCESS, TASKS AND ACTIVITIES

Two main tasks were decided upon: writing a commercial letter (replying to enquiries from the parent company) (Task 1), and writing a report about the Brazilian branch activities (Task 2). For each task, learners went through the six phases discussed below.

It should be remembered that learners were aware of how process writing would be developed and had agreed on the adoption of this process (Appendix 2).

Generating, a crucial part of the process, involved group discussion of what the learners would write about, brainstorming the topic, the purpose for writing, the appropriate form in which to write, working out a plot and developing the organisation of ideas. I proposed individual structured note-taking while brainstorming. After explaining how this would be done, learners agreed with the proposal and it was so done. I mediated brainstorming by asking questions about the topics mentioned just above.

Focusing "upon a central idea ... [aimed to] unify and inform the text" (White and Arndt, 1996"44). In both tasks, individual fastwriting was proposed, aiming at developing the notes that had been taken during brainstorming (Jacobs, 1986). There followed a discussion (in threes) upon their individual pieces of writing focused on selecting and rejecting ideas according to their purpose for writing, target audience and planned form.

Structuring "information entails various organisational processes of grouping ideas together and deciding upon how to sequence them ... before writers start on a first draft " (White and Arndt, 1996:779). Structuring facilitated ordering information by grouping ideas into clusters or categories, by considering priorities, and by experimenting with arrangements in order to produce a preliminary structure that related to the focal idea. These operations constituted a rough draft in the form of organised notes, and were conducted in collaboration, encouraging both self and peer evaluation. Learners were made aware that structuring was not a finite stage, that they would later have to readjust their writing to these original plans on an on-going re-organisation process (White and Arndt, 1996:78-79).

Although these three phases are often classified as 'pre-writing' (Bello, 1997; Byrne, 1988; Hedge, 1988; Richards, 1990), some form of writing does occur in note-taking while brainstorming, focusing and structuring. It was also observed that these three phases recurred as mental processes that permeated the following phases.

It should be remarked that learners worked in different pairs and threes in Tasks 1 and 2.

Drafting started by using the "stretches of text that [had] already been produced ... in fastwriting" (White and Arndt, 1996:99) and in structuring, and addressed ways of beginning, developing and ending the specific types of text effectively. Learners worked alone to compose their first drafts. Although prompts (Appendix 4) are suggested for structuring (White and Arndt, 1996:83-87), I judged that learners would best profit from prompts when writing their first draft: they were just too anxious to shape their notes into something that resembled the final product, and receiving some input to assist them with writing indeed proved to lower their anxiety.

Before reading their first drafts to the whole group (first task), there was a discussion on the criteria that would be adopted for the **evaluation** of the drafts (Appendix 5). Learners were aware that "by learning to evaluate others' writing and responding in turn to evaluation of their own [they would] gradually build that capacity for self-assessment which is ... a vital element in the process of writing."(White and Arndt, 1996:117). Group evaluation involved questions, as they sought better understanding of what each other was trying to write, and provided encouragement with constructive comments (Crandall & Peyton,1993:65 in Bello, 1997). Learners felt that **grammar instruction** on adverbial clauses of contrast was needed. Grammar instruction was carried out as described in Part 3.

Evaluation and grammar instruction proved to be effective. They led to **reviewing**, whose objective – "to further develop critical capacities and ... to enrich the repertoire of linguistic resources which are essential tools for writing" (White and Arndt, 1996:137) – was achieved. The second drafts – again produced individually, as homework – were improved versions. In fact, they constituted contextualised practice of adverbial clauses of contrast (and of other grammatical features that had been raised during Evaluation), and together with evaluation and grammar instruction, characterised situated learning.

For the **evaluation** of the second draft prompts were used again (Appendix 6). But this time a different procedure was adopted: In pairs, each learner read his peer's draft, and then wrote back as a real reader, analysing and evaluating the text, and also supplying suggestions for editing (spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalisation, etc.).

The final drafts were then produced and marked. A simple marking scheme was adopted, and it was clearly explained to learners. (Appendix 7). Final drafts were returned and commented on.

At the end of both tasks, product and process were assessed. Assessment leads to evaluation, which "... is inherent to the teaching/learning process, and must, therefore, play an instructional and educational role: judgement (upon the teaching/learning process and the products of this process) must be used as constant input to re-orientate the process, as a source for reflection and for responsible decision-making. Evaluation is action." (Capocchi Ribeiro, 1997).

Appendix 8 supplies class planning and the actual rationale of instruction. It shows changes that were implemented due to learners' unexpected needs; some of these changes implied in different instruction management which, fortunately, was made possible by the learners' good level of engagement and responsibility towards learning.

CONCLUSION

When evaluating the adoption of process writing, learners pointed to the consistency of this approach with the principles that underlie their ESP programme (situated learning and communicative language teaching). Positive feedback was similarly expressed towards another key aspect of process writing: "to help learners develop in ways which are appropriate and fulfilling to their level of language proficiency"(White and Arndt, 1996:6).

It has been observed that while and after going through process writing, these students' oral communicative competence has developed, too. Plausible reasons are firstly, because the phases conducted in collaboration promoted interactions in which the negotiation of meaning involved grammatical, socio-linguistic, discourse and strategic competence (Savignon, 1983). And secondly, because the mental processes that are involved in process writing apply to oral discourse, too. All the students in the group have reported that they experienced focusing, structuring, evaluating and reviewing taking place inside their minds before verbalising their ideas, while speaking and even after having spoken. As a result, their speech is better organised, and their ideas are expressed more accurately, appropriately and coherently. As a consequence, the students are able to identify their progress in grammatical, socio-linguistic, discourse and strategic terms.

It follows that what this paper proposes may foster the development of written (and consequently, oral) communicative competence in relation to other grammatical structures, irrespective of the learners' level of proficiency. If learning is situated and if instruction nurtures the appropriate competencies, learners will be given opportunities to work out solutions to the communication problems they (will) face when using the target language in real life.

But ... it takes a teacher and an educator to organise and mediate the teaching/learning process.

(4,261 words)

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INDIVIDUAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Please, supply as much information as possible in your answers. Express your views and your feelings freely: it is important for us to know about your needs and interests, as well as how much you already know.

Thank you.

Name: **Date:**

1. What type(s) of documents do you have to write?

_____

2. Have you written any documents of this type before? _____

3. What other types of texts have you produced so far?

_____

4. What have you done to produce these texts? Please, explain the writing process in terms of planning, actual writing and revision; the time you spent; and the resources you used (dictionaries, reference texts, assistance from other people).

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. How do you feel about your previous writing experiences?

_____

6. Let's go back to the texts you need to write now. Please, specify

⇒ why you have to write these texts: _____

⇒ the audience (who you are writing to): _____

⇒ the degree of formality the texts should have: _____

7. What language structures can you predict will be used? (verb tenses, types of nouns, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, relative pronouns, passive voice, etc.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

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8. How confidently are you able to use each of the structures you mention in 7 above? Justify your answer.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

9. How do you believe the instruction should be carried out? Please, consider:

=> Is revision of grammar structures necessary? If so, of which grammar structures?

_____

_____

=> What type of activities can promote your development in writing? Why?

_____

_____

_____

=> What type of group arrangement (pair work, group work, individual work) would you most profit from? Why?

_____

_____

=> What's you availability for autonomous work between one class and the next?

_____

10. Can you supply samples of the target product(s)? _____

THE GROUP'S NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Name: *GROUP BP 6* **Date:** *NOVEMBER 98*

1. What type(s) of documents do you have to write?

Reports and commercial letters to the parent company (6)

2. Have you written any documents of this type before? *Yes (6)*

3. What other types of texts have you produced so far?
Memos (4) Financial Statements (2) E-mails (3)

4. What have you done to produce these texts? Please, explain the writing process in terms of planning, actual writing and revision; the time you spent; and the resources you used (dictionaries, reference texts, assistance from other people)

- *"I always think before writing, make notes to plan what I will say and how I will say it, the structures and the vocabulary I will have to use". Then, I use a dictionary to find the words I don't know. I write a draft, after some time I review it and then write it again to improve the quality. Then I give it to my boss to review it (when he has time). (1)*
- *"I never plan. I don't have time. I usually get a document of the same type and copy it, changing what has to be changed according to the subject and the people who will read it. When I need, I consult a dictionary or ask other people of the company to help me. Better saying, I always ask the department's secretary to review the documents because she writes very well." (2)*
- *"Sometimes I plan (when I have time), other times I don't. When I plan, I write a scheme of the topics, the key words, write the first draft and then usually ask someone to look at the document. When I can't plan, I copy from documents that the parent company sends us. They always have the correct language, good idiomatic expressions, the right format." (3)*

5. How do you feel about your previous writing experiences?
"I feel that I am not able to write these texts by myself. I am frustrated sometimes". (6)

6. Let's go back to the texts you need to write now. Please, specify

⇒ why you have to write these texts: *We always have to send reports to the parent company about sales (6); I frequently have to reply to letters send by the parent company (6); I frequently have to write letters to the parent company asking for permission, advice, etc. (5)*

⇒ the audience (who you are writing to): *The Director of Overseas Branches (5); his secretary (3); the export department (3)*

⇒ the degree of formality the texts should have: *Most of the letters must be very formal and have a specific format (6). The reports are very formal and contain a lot of information (6)*

7. What language structures can you predict will be used? (verb tenses, types of nouns, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions; relative pronouns, passive voice, etc.)

Present Perfect (5); Simple Past (6), Simple Present and Present Continuous (4).

Nouns have to be related to the subject. (5)

Adjectives are important, to correctly qualify nouns. (4).

Adverbs are important too. (02)

Conjunctions like although, in spite of, however, nevertheless, etc. are used in sophisticated sentences (6).

Relative Pronouns (5) show good language proficiency. (3).

Passive Voice (5) is frequently used. (2)

8. How confidently are you able to use each of the structures you mention in 7 above? Justify your answer.

The verb tenses are OK, maybe just a little practice with Present Perfect. (3)

I have no problems with nouns. (5). I'd like to learn appropriate adjectives (3)

Conjunctions are a big problem. I don't know how to use conjunctions, how to construct the sentences (5)

Relative Pronouns are like Portuguese, no problem. (4)

Passive Voice is like Portuguese, no problem. (5)

9. How do you believe the instruction should be carried out? Please, consider:

⇒ Is revision of grammar structures necessary? If so, of which grammar structures?

Yes, it is necessary. (6)
Conjunctions (6), Present Perfect (1), vocabulary (adjectives) (2)

⇒ What type of activities can promote your development in writing? Why?

For conjunctions:

- *Combining simple separate sentences into a single sentence using the conjunctions suggested by the teacher. (5)*
- *Linking sentences using the appropriate conjunction. (6)*
- *We could brainstorm ideas we want to express - in Portuguese - and then try to express them in English. (5)*

For Present Perfect: We could brainstorm ideas we want to express - in Portuguese - and then try to express them in English. (1)

For adjectives: re-writing some sentences trying to use more appropriate adjectives. These adjectives could be suggested by the teacher (choosing from a list) (2) or we could use the dictionary for synonyms (1)

In general: re-writing what is wrong (5); following a model (3); re-writing from less formal to more formal language (4).

⇒ What type of group arrangement (pair work, group work, individual work) would you most profit from? Why?

The "hard work", individually. (5)

Pair work is good to exchange ideas about how to improve the writing. (5)

Group work is also good: we could read each other's work and suggest how to elaborate. (4)

⇒ What's you availability for autonomous work between one class and the next?

Little time (about 2 hours) (6) but I can try to find more time (4).

10. Can you supply samples of the target product(s)? *Yes (6)*

15

Negotiation of the learning process

Grammatical structure that was voted for instruction: *adverbial clauses of contrast (students were not familiar with the term 'concession'), the functions of these clauses in the sentences (subject, object, etc.) are not necessary.*

Preferred type of activities:

a) *explanations about the meaning of the conjunctions and how they are used to link ideas*

b) *contextualised practice of this structure (reflecting how the learners use this structure in real life) in the three types of exercises suggested by the students.*

The teacher's suggestion: *going through process writing in order to develop the competence in this grammatical structure in the real life contexts where the students use it: writing reports and commercial letters.*

Explanations were given about

- *how this process would develop*
- *the type of activities that would be conducted in order to perform the two main tasks*
  - *Task 1 = writing a commercial letter (replying to enquiries from the parent company)*
  - *Task 2 = writing a report about the Brazilian branch activities*

and

- *how the learners would profit from this type of instruction*

General Consensus:

Teacher's suggestion was accepted by all the students, who were able to perceive further developments in their written communication besides the appropriate and correct use of this specific grammatical structure.

Students' signatures

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

GRAMMATICAL INSTRUCTION

TASK 1

Identifying differences and similarities between spoken and written language

Activity 1

Study the following language features and mark S if they are used in spoken English, and/or W if they are used in written English. Try to remember instances of spoken English (recording on cassette, videos, seminars, conferences, meetings, etc.) and of written English (newspaper/magazine articles, letters to friends, postcards, commercial letters, reports, memos, etc.) you've been exposed to.

* slang ( )
* idiomatic expressions ( )
* formal language ( )
* informal language ( )
* pauses in discourse ( )
* re-wording/paraphrasing ( )
* signalling devices (remember Unit 4?) ( )
* separate, simple sentences ( )
* more complex and connected sentences ( )
* more emphasis on grammatical correctness? ( )

Activity 2

Discuss your views with your group. Together, identify the possible contexts for each of the above features (type of message, style, from whom to whom, purpose of the message, where the people were, and when it happened)

Activity 3

Together with two other classmates, discuss the following:

- if the same "language behaviour" and specific characteristics (what you have just discussed in Activity 2) occur in Portuguese

differences	*similarities*

- which specific "language behaviours" can be said to be universal (applicable to all languages)

TASK 2

Identifying differences and similarities between English and Portuguese

Activity 1

1. Read the texts below and, together with a classmate, identify the features of written language that were discussed in Task 1:

- type of text
- style (degree of formality included)
- addressee and addresser
- purpose of the message
- where the people were
- gap between writing and receiving a reply

(text 1 – a letter of enquiry written in English: sample provided by the learners)

(text 2 – a letter of enquiry written in Portuguese: translation of text 1))

(specific grammatical features: adverbial subordinate clauses of contrast and of cause/effect)

2. Discuss with your group: what are the differences and similarities between the English text and the Portuguese text?

Activity 2

1. Read the same texts again, and with another classmate, identify the following features:

- separate, simple sentences
- more complex sentences
- the meanings expressed in these more complex sentences
- how the writer signals these meanings to the reader

2. Discuss your views with your group.

3. Take notes about your teacher's explanations.

Activity 3

Now, match the columns and then complete the statements below:

(1) clause	( ) oração principal
(2) sentence	( ) oração subordinativa
(3) simple sentence	( ) conjunções subordinativas
(4) compound sentence	( ) oração subordinativa de contraste
(5) complex sentence	( ) oração
(6) main clause	( ) período composto por subordinação
(7) subordinate clause	( ) período
(8) subordinators (subordinating conjunctions)	( ) período simples
(9) subordinate clauses of contrast	( ) período composto por coordenação

Subordinate clauses _____ the main clause.
Subordinate clauses are linked to the main clause by _____.
In the English text, the subordinate clauses of contrast are the following:

- _____
  _____
- _____
  _____

In the above subordinate clauses, contrast was signalled by these conjuncts: _____ and _____

Activity 4

1. Analyse the following examples (taken from two reports), circle the subordinate clauses of contrast and underline the conjuncts that introduce them.

Even though the present economic situation is not favourable, there has not been a drop in sales.

Chart B shows that our sales revenue and pre-tax profits are at excellent levels. However, I should recommend caution in relation to keeping high inventories.

We stand to gain most from concentrating on the south-eastern region; nevertheless, we must be attentive to the upward trend in sales that the central region has shown in the past six months.

The market survey that was conducted there reveals a growing demand for our products; yet, it is too premature to direct efforts to this region as we have little brand awareness there.

In spite of the rumours mentioned above, it is my strong belief that we should put our efforts into further expansion in the southern region. We have a consolidated position in the capital cities of those three states; on the other hand, we are not able to cater for the growing demand from the smaller interior towns.

2. How are the above clauses of contrast realised? Study the structures that precede and follow each conjunct, and the punctuation. What are the similarities and differences in relation to Portuguese?

TASK 3

Expressing contrast

Activity 1

1. You are receiving an important visitor from the parent company next week. He has written a rather formal letter to you asking for information about the present Brazilian economic situation. Before replying
   - list the contrasts that are expressed in the daily papers
   - at first, write only the sentences that will express these contrasts.
   - review your sentences attending to the structures and the punctuation that you studied in Task 3

2. The visitor has arrived. He has asked you to write a short article for the parent company newsletter. The topic is: the ethical diversity of the Brazilian people.
   - list the contrasting features
   - write first the sentences that will express these contrasts.
   - review your sentences attending to the structures and the punctuation that you studied in Task 3
   - write a first draft of your short article in order to show it to the visitor

3. Do the exercises that have been assigned from the grammar book.

4. Think of a professional problem that you or your department are facing at the moment. What contrasting features can you identify? Write a memo to your superior
   - introducing the problem
   - expressing the contrasts you have identified
   - proposing a solution

PROMPTS FOR THE FIRST DRAFT

Write your first draft as a development of the rough draft you have produced with your peers. Use the following prompts to marshal your ideas into what will constitute a micro-plan for future drafts.

- Decide which statements are general one and which support ideas that have been previously presented.
- Decide which statements can be grouped together.
- List groups of statements from the most important ones to the least important ones.
- Think about logical links between your groups of ideas in order to express cause and effect, comparison and contrast and additional information/ideas.
- Decide on an order in which to deal with these groups of ideas.
- Add extra information at appropriate points to clarify and elaborate on the basic information.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

1ST DRAFT

A) Type of writing

- Does the text conform to the conventions usually expected of its type (margins, titles and sub-titles, heading and footnotes)?

B) Purpose and ideas

- Is the writer's purpose clear?
- Do we understand the main ideas (personal and professional background, and details of experiences that are of relevance to the course) ?

C) Structure of the text

- Is it easy to follow the development of the ideas/argument?
- Would it help to rearrange the sequence of ideas? In what way(s)?
- Do the relations between the ideas need to be changed? In what way(s)?
- Do the connections between the ideas need to be
  - ⇒ elaborated (by using more appropriate synonymous expressions / complex sentences)?
  - ⇒ made more explicit (by using different or additional discourse markers)?
- Are the ideas grouped together in a suitable way?
- Is the text segmented into appropriate paragraphs?
- Should any of the paragraphs be joined together? Which ones?
- Should any of the paragraphs be broken down into smaller units? Which one(s) and how?

D) Response as readers

- Do we feel satisfied with the way the text comes to an end?
- Are there any points which are unnecessary? Why?
- Are there any points which we don't understand?
- Are there any points on which we would like more information?

(This form resulted from the negotiation of the teacher's and the learners' views.
Source for the teacher's suggestions: White and Arndt, 1996:118)

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

2ND DRAFT

A) Logical links

- Are logical links between ideas clear/ appropriate?
- Should any of the following conjunctions make logical links clearer/ more appropriate?

Additional /sequenced ideas	Contrasting	Cause and Effect / Reason
Moreover, ...	*However*	*So, ...*
Furthermore, ...	*Although ..., ...;*	*Therefore, ...*
In addition to (this/that), ...	*(Even) though ...., ...*	*Thus, ...*
Besides (that), ...	*....., though.*	*Consequently, ...*
Firstly, ... ; secondly, ...	*On the other hand, ...*	*As a result, ...*
	Despite ..., ...	
	In spite of ..., ...	*..... for .....*
	Nevertheless, ...	*..... because .....*
	.....; yet, ...	*..... since .....*

B) Divisions

- Are the different segments/parts of the text well 'signposted'?
- Are paragraph boundaries well-established according to the ideas they convey?

  ⇒ Does each paragraph move from more general to more specific points?

C) The focal idea

- Is the focal idea easily identified?
- Should the focal idea be somehow 'highlighted'?

D) Correcting the language

- Are verb tenses correct?
- Adjective or adverb order: anything that should be corrected?
- Are there any points which we don't understand?
- Are there any articles or prepositions that should be corrected?
- Are there any sentence structure errors?

(This form resulted from the negotiation of the teacher's and the learners' views.
Source for the teacher's suggestions: White and Arndt, 1996 chapter 7)

CRITERIA FOR MARKING THE FINAL TEXT

ELEMENTS
Content: information supplied and style **Organisation:** ideas and their logical and coherent linkage and development **Vocabulary:** correct and appropriate choice of words and idioms **Structure:** grammatical features **Mechanics:** punctuation, spelling, and general format

DESCRIPTORS				
Very good	**Good**	**Fair**	**Approaching**	**Poor**
9.1 > 10	**8.1 > 9.0**	**7.1 > 8.0**	**6.1 > 7.0**	**below 6.0**

(Source: White and Arndt, 1996:175-176)

Examples:

ELEMENTS	DESCRIPTORS
Organisation	**Good (8.3)** Text is well organised. Main ideas are introduced and argumentatively supported. They are also well developed, although you tend to use the certain conjunctions repeatedly (*however; in addition to that; thus).* The end is a bit abrupt, but does not impair comprehension. **or** **Fair (7.1)** Organisation must be improved: although your ideas are well developed, you tend to "jump" into new ideas a little too abruptly, without advising the reader. Clearer links must be established.
Vocabulary	**Approaching (6.5)** Good attempt at using technical jargon; however, you must "dose" it, for your discourse "sounds" a little pedantic and the text has become heavy-reading. **or** **Poor (5.5)** You tend to use a lot of Latin words: beware of false cognates! Also, there is little variation. What about synonyms?

	CLASS PLAN	INSTRUCTION RATIONALE
1	**Task 1** Explanation of how the process would be conducted, Generating (group), Focusing and Structuring (in trios).	**Task 1** Explanation of how the process would be conducted, Generating and Focusing. Explanation of the process took longer for learners wanted detailed information.
2	Recapping on Structuring and writing first draft (individually).	Structuring, which generated extensive negotiation and much re-planning until the original structure was finally agreed on. The first draft was assigned as homework, and surprisingly, all the students produced their assignment at the third class, a good indicator of engagement..
3	Negotiation of the criteria for the evaluation of the first drafts; writing and printing the Criteria Card (PC). Reading the first drafts (whole group) and group Evaluation.	**OK.**
4	Probably grammar instruction Homework: Reviewing first drafts and writing second drafts.	Grammar instruction Homework: more contextualised activities (Appendix 3)
5	Discussion of the criteria for the evaluation of the second drafts; writing and printing the Criteria Card (on PC). Reading the second drafts and Evaluation.	Correction and discussion of homework > 5 out of 6 students did the homework: good level of engagement. Grammar instruction: paragraph writing and linking. (Appendix 3) Homework: Reviewing first drafts and writing second drafts.
6	Explanation of marking criteria. Writing the final drafts.	All the students did their assignment! I developed the criteria for the evaluation of the second drafts, and minor changes were negotiated in class. As we were late in schedule, I did so to catch up, while still promoting their participation in decision-making. Writing and printing the Criteria Card (on PC) Reading the second drafts and Evaluation.
7	Returning final drafts and discussing the marking. Evaluation of the first task (product and process) and negotiation of second task: what should be changed.	Explanation of marking criteria, Writing the final drafts. Homework: finishing the final drafts.

8	**Task 2** Generating (group), Focusing and Structuring (in pairs)	All the students produced the final draft! Marking and discussing the marking
9	Recapping on Structuring, and writing first draft (individually)	Evaluation of the first task (product and process) and negotiation of second task: what should be changed **Task 2** Generating (group) and Focusing (in pairs)
10	Reading first draft to a smaller group (threes), and Evaluation	Structuring (in pairs) and beginning first draft (individually) Homework: finishing first draft
11	Grammar instruction Homework: reviewing first draft and writing second draft	Reading first draft to a smaller group (threes), and Evaluation Homework: contextualised grammar activities (Appendix 3)
12	Reading the second drafts and Evaluation Grammar instruction Homework: writing the final drafts > next class one week later, so that they have time to do homework	Correction and discussion of homework Writing second drafts(individually) Homework: finishing second drafts
13	(one week later) Marking final draft and discussing the marking	Reading the second drafts and Evaluation Grammar instruction Homework: writing the final drafts > next class one week later, so that they have time to do homework
14	Evaluation of the second task (product and process) compared to the first: improvements Negotiation about the adoption of process writing to future writing necessities: what can be done autonomously and what should be done in class	(one week later) Marking final draft and discussing the marking
15	----------	Evaluation of the second task (product and process) compared to the first: improvements Negotiation about the adoption of process writing to future writing necessities: what can be done autonomously and what should be done in class

CLASS PLAN	INSTRUCTION RATIONALE
Estimated time of class instruction: 14 classes X 1 ½ hours = 21 hours **Estimated time of autonomous work outside class** (based on Needs Analysis, Appendix 2) ➢ Approximately 5 / 6 hours	**Actual time of class instruction:** 15 classes X 1 ½ hours = 22 ½ hours **Learners' estimated time of autonomous work outside class** ➢ Approximately 15 hours